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REMARKS

Applicants have cancelled claims 104, 115, 121, 127, 138-140, 144, 146-148, 170, 172-174, 176, 177, 211, 217, 242, 250, 263, 276, 285-288, 291, 292, 300, 303 and 307 and have amended many of the remaining claims as indicated. New claims 308 and 309 have been added, and care has been taken to avoid the introduction of new matter. Claims 105-112, 114, 116-120, 122-126, 128-133, 135-137, 141-143, 145, 149-157, 159-169, 171, 175, 178-186, 191-194, 199-202, 207-210, 212-216, 218-241, 243-249, 251-262, 264-275, 277-284, 289-290, 293-299, 301, 302, 304-306, 308 and 309 are presently pending in this application.

Applicants would like to thank Examiner Ralph Lewis for his thorough search and review of the prior-art, his careful consideration and examination of the present application and claims, and his indication of the existence of allowable subject matter in claims 105-107, 114, 115, 135, 159, 212, 214 and 216. In particular, the Examiner stated that claims 135, 159, 214 and 216 are allowed, and that claims 105-107, 114, 115 and 212 contain allowable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten into independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants have written all of the objected-to claims as independent claims in accordance with the above and submit that such claims are thus allowable.

The Office Action objected to the specification under 37 CFR 1.75(d)(1) as allegedly failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter, citing to alleged deficiencies in claims 112, 120, 130, 141, 154, 165, 178, 261, 275-291 and 307, and further rejected claims 112, 120, 130, 141, 154, 165, 178, 261, 275-291 and 307 under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as allegedly failing to comply with the enablement requirement. In response, Applicants have implemented amendments to address the stated concerns.

The Office Action rejected claims 112, 120, 130, 141, 146, 165, 178, 261, 275, 291 and 307 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite for failing to

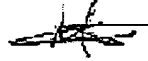
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particularly point out and distinctly claim subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention. In response, Applicants have implemented amendments to address the 35 U.S.C. 112 concerns.

The Office Action further rejected various claims under 35 U.S.C. 102(a), 102(b) and 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over various combinations of references. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections as they relate to the claims even before the present amendment, but have amended the subject claims so that each independent claim contains the allowable subject matter of one of the objected-to claims in order to expedite the prosecution of the subject application. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the current prior-art rejections is requested.

In view of the above, Applicants submit that the application is now in condition for allowance, and an early indication of same is requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned with any questions

Respectfully submitted,



Kenton R. Mullins
Attorney for Applicants
Reg. No. 36,331

STOUT, UXA, BUYAN & MULLINS, LLP
4 Venture, Suite 300
Irvine, CA 92618
Telephone: (949) 450-1750
Facsimile: (949) 450-1764